



STINGER SPORTS

VARSITY FOOTBALL: 1987 PREVIEW

The Concordia Stingers will head into the 1987 Ontario Quebec Intercollegiate Football Conference (O-QIFC) schedule with a fine blend of newcomers and veterans.

With only six top name starters graduating, Head Coach Skip Rochette has every reason to believe the Stingers will turn things around following a dismal 1986 campaign.

Last season saw the Stingers finish last in the six team circuit with a 1-6 record. Nonetheless, it was not all doom and gloom for Rochette's men of the grid.

Concordia's lone triumph came in the Shaughnessy Cup game against McGill, on a sunny October 11 afternoon at the Loyola Campus. A crowd of more than 2,000 enthusiastic fans watched the local squad pull out a thrilling 23-21 victory. Statistically, a number of Concordia performers posted impressive numbers in 1986.

Quarterback Steve Preston concluded his varsity career by completing 103 of 205 pass attempts for 1,488 yards and eight touchdowns.

Highly touted newcomers Ron Aboud, a standout at the pivot position for Vanier College the past two seasons and CEGEP Vieux Montreal grad Steve Faubert, will battle it out for the vacant signal-caller spot.

The man who wins the quarterback job will have plenty of experienced men capable of both carrying and catching the ball. Tight end Tony Diorio & wide receiver Mirco Buth are among the finest hands in the O-QIFC. Diorio caught 28 passes for 423 yards and two touchdowns in 1986 while Buth, selected to the All-Conference team, snared 26 passes for 514 yards and four touchdowns.

In the backfield, Rochette hopes he can keep standout Joe D'Elia healthy. Despite missing three games because of a knee injury he rushed for 351 yards on 61 carries and scored four touchdowns. Knee problems kept Robert Bourque on the sidelines all season, but rookie Greg Cyr (224 yards) and graduating veteran George Drimaropolous (121 yards) plugged the gaps admirably.

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The individual highlights continued into the off-season. Offensive tackle Rocco Romano, who would later be selected in the opening round (fifth overall) of the Canadian Football League draft by Calgary, was named to the All-Canadian team. The hulking 265 pound Hamilton native was also named Stinger offensive lineman of the year.

Two other Stingers were CFL picks: offensive guard Mike Bertone by the now defunct Montreal Alouettes and defensive tackle Joe Fortune, grabbed by the Hamilton Tiger-Cats. No other O-QIFC team had as many players taken.

Rochette expects rookie running back Jean Francois Heroux from the CEGEP Trois Rivières Diablos to gain notice quickly as "one of the fastest at his position". Offensive guard Paul Vajda, wide receiver Nigel Smith and fullback Devon Anderson of Vanier College are also being counted on. All Canadian and All-star candidates should be plentiful from Concordia including Buth, Diorio, D'Elia, Bertone and offensive tackle Richard McCrory who has the difficult task of replacing Romano.

On defence Chapados, cornerback David Cescon and defensive linemen Gilles David and Martin Ferdais also have to be considered contenders.

The Stingers will play host to the York University Yeomen of Toronto Saturday September 5 (1 p.m.) in a non-conference game at the Loyola Campus.